

Beneath the Mask

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Beneath the Mask

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Summary

"Those who smile the biggest hurt the most." No matter what, America was constantly smiling. He always seemed to ignore the insults and berating of other nations. However, when America begins to act a little strange, England begins to wonder if he's really as happy as what he let's on. Could there be more to this than meets the eyes?
AngstyandSuicidal!America. No Pairings.

Chapter 1

Story: *Beneath the Mask*

Summary: *"Those who smile the biggest hurt the most." No matter what, America was constantly smiling. He always seemed to ignore the insults and berating of other nations. However, when America begins to act a little strange, England begins to wonder if he's really as happy as what he let's on. Could there be more to this than meets the eyes? Angsty and Suicidal! America. No Pairings.*

Disclaimer: *I don't own Hetalia.*

Warnings: *Angsty-Depressed! America, Angst, mild Profanity, Self-loathing, Depression, Anorexia and things related to it. A fair amount of cutting and self-harm, Possible suicide attempt, POSSIBLE touchy topics, and of course blood...and, well, you probably get the point by now, da...? ^J^*

PS: *NOTHING SEXUAL, NOR ANY PAIRINGS, WILL OCCUR IN THIS STORY, just to set the record straight, unless you consider France's flirtatious personality 'sexual'.*

It was not the most typical world meeting, and nobody could help but notice. An eerie silence had filled the entire room, as Germany sighed, gazing over at a certain nation's spot, which was still empty. How long had they been waiting?

Used to, America was always one of the first ones to arrive, but for about four months now, he kept calling in and told them that he had some important business to attend to, and wouldn't be able to make it. However, he hadn't called in *yet*, so they had decided to wait a little longer. Not that he would really admit it, but it actually sort of worried a certain brit, as England didn't fully buy the git's story.

Suddenly, he could feel several pairs of eyes fixated on him, as though they thought *he* was suppose to know where the American was.

"Why the bloody hell are all of you staring at *me*, like *I* should know where he is?!" he demanded, sticking his nose in the air. "I'm not his babysitter, and nor is he my responsibility anymore."

After a moment, Germany muttered something incoherent beneath his breath. "Very well. We'll have to begin-"

That's when the door flew open and America ran in, smiling. A lot of nations looked up to notice how pale he looked. "The hero is finally here! Sorry, I'm so late, dudes!"

Germany would have normally demanded for an explanation as to why he was so late, *however*, considering the time, he simply sighed, shaking his head. "No, it's fine... Just take your seat."

As America closed the door, Germany then concluded the beginning of the meeting.

"Why are you just *now* getting here, you git?!" England hissed, after America took the only seat left next to him. "Where the bloody hell have you been?!"

"Oh, you know..." the America briefly paused, obviously contemplating his response, before smiling. "I was talking care of some important hero business."

England scoffed. "By 'hero business', I bet you mean stuffing your face with those greasy hamburgers, don't you?!"

"*No*." America insisted, making sure to emphasize it. He looked like he wanted to say something else, but in the end, remained silent. England only grunted in reply, turning his attention to the conversation at hand.

America briefly looked down, his smile faltering, as he quickly shifted his sleeve. Studying him, England couldn't help but notice America's distant look.

"America?" he inquired, causing America to somewhat jump, startled. After looking back up, the wheat-blond haired nation gave one of his trademark grins.

"Yeah, dude? What is it?" he questioned.

"Are you feeling okay?" England finally asked, secretly eying the former colony. Was it just him, or had America seemed different lately? He looked the same, dressed the same, and talked the same, but when he smiled, or laughed, it didn't seem to meet his eyes.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Why do you ask?" America wanted to know.

England studied him for a brief second, before pushing the thoughts aside. "...Nevermind, it's nothing."

"Okay, if you say so, dude." America looked at him, somewhat confused.

"Hmph..." England silently grunted, then turning to face Germany, who was now speaking.

Why am I worrying?

What was he thinking? It was probably just his imagination. America was fine; he even said so.

But what if he's not? He could be acting.

Well, he supposed America *was* a good actor when he wanted to be. But that didn't say anything! Ha, the wanker probably didn't even know the *meaning* of the words 'not fine'.

That doesn't mean he is fine.

In the back of his head, voices kept contradicting him, when suddenly, he mentally slapped himself. Why was he getting so worried over such a little thing, and who even said he was *worried*?!

He finally managed to push all of his doubts, and negative thoughts, aside, and that was when the end of the Conference came.

"Before I conclude the end of this meeting, is there something anyone would like to say? Any questions?" England looked up, surprised to see that the meeting was over. Germany gazed around in question, before glancing over at America, who, at this time, would *normally* always comment on something about global warming, hamburgers, fast food, or sometimes even Pizza. "America?"

Said nation looked up, smiling. "No, I'm fine."

"Very well. Everyone is free to leave." Germany announced, after a moment, as he got up.

At every conference, different nations would usually bring a selection of traditional snacks or desserts for at the end of the meeting, in case someone wanted a snack before leaving. After some time had passed, everyone had fixed themselves a plate, but England couldn't help but notice that America hadn't touched his food at all since getting it.

"Hey, fat ass, aren't you going to eat anything?" he rose an eyebrow. "You haven't touched your food at all."

"Oh, me?" America discreetly shooed his hand, giving a laugh that, maybe it was just him but, seemed forced. "I just ate a little while ago, so I'm not really that hungry."

England gave him a strange look and that's when he heard a soft grumbling. "Did your stomach just growl?"

"What are you talking about?" America once again looked at him, confused. "I didn't hear anything."

"Mmn, I see, maybe it's just my imagination, then." England reluctantly admitted, once again turning back to his food. After eating several cheese crackers, he suddenly felt his cell phone vibrating.

Taking it out, he discovered that he had a new message from his boss. It kind of took him by surprise, as he wasn't used to receiving text messages from *him* of all people. So he assumed it must've been fairly important.

He quickly scanned over the text. It read,

Due to some issues at the Airport in England, you're going to have to stay in America for a few weeks while I straighten things out.

In America? Why couldn't the meeting have been planned in Japan instead...? He would have *preferred* staying *there*... The Asian and him actually got along fairly well. He reluctantly let it go, as he supposed that there was no use in complaining.

He turned to Alfred, swallowing. "...Say, America?"

"Yeah? What's up, England?" America then faced him, questioningly. England shifted awkwardly in his seat.

"C-can I by chance stay with you for a few weeks...?" he asked.

"Sure, I guess." America shrugged, smiling. "Why?"

"It's nothing important. Something just came up, and I can't go back to England right now. That's all." England told him matter-of-factly.

"Oh. Yeah, that's fine." America said, standing up. "Anyway, I'm going to the bathroom. I'll be right back."

England took another bite of his food, when he was suddenly 'hugged' from behind.

"Angleterre~" France chimed, causing him to blush in embarrassment.

"What the bloody hell are you doing?! Get your dirty hands off me, frog!" England exclaimed, pushing him off.

"Well, that's no way to greet someone!" France huffed, backing away, as he folded his arms.

"Hey, France," England mumbled, catching his attention. "Can I ask you something?"

"Oh? Of course, You can ask me anything~" France told him, obviously referring to more things than one, and England somehow managed to ignore that fact.

"Is it just me, or does America seem a little pale today...?"

France's face turned more serious. "Oui, you noticed it, too?"

"Yeah, he didn't eat appear to eat anything." England said, averting his gaze.

"Honhonhon, Is this worry, I'm sensing, Angleterre~?" France smirked, once again hugging him.

"I said to get off me, frog!" England exclaimed, jabbing him in the stomach.

"Well, you don't have to be so rude!" France stated, now clutching his stomach.

"Hmph." England immediately turned away, irritated.

"I'm a bit worried, too, you know?" France told him with a genuine smile, as he placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, well, we *are* family, I suppose." England reluctantly admitted.

"Oui, it *is* only natural for a big brother to be concerned for his fellow siblings, non?"

"I'm back." They looked up to see that America had returned.

"Oh, hey, France, what's up?" he beamed.

"Nothing much, Amérique." France answered, giving a sly smile, as he wrapped an arm around him. "What about you? How is my little brother? Doing good, non?"

The corner of America's lip twitched, awkwardly. "...Yeah, I'm doing great, dude."

"That's nice to hear." France beamed, backing up. "Anyway, all though I would to stay here a little longer, I should probably get going. You two take care~"

"Sure thing." America replied.

"Right." England rolled his eyes a little in response, finally finishing off his plate.

"I'm about ready to go. Do you have anything left to do?" England wanted to know, after throwing away his empty, and America's untouched, plate.

The American shook his head. "No, not really."

"Alright." England said, bending down to pick up his suitcase.

"Man, could you British people be any slower? Come on, dude!" America said, grabbing his wrist.

"I am not *slow*, you bloody git!" England retorted, as he was pulled towards the door. "H-hey!"

~ End of Chapter

A/N: What do you think so far? Review, if you will. By the way, If any of you have me on your alert list, you have noticed that I write a lot of depressing things like this. Just thought I'd let you guys know why. I suffer from a lot of Anxiety, and (what I think is) anhenomia, a form of depression which pretty much disables me from feeling good about things, or, in my case takes away any emotions in general. My PDD-NOS (A form of High-functioning Autism) only makes it that much worse, as I also have a very hard time understanding others. While I'm alone, I want to be with friends, but when I'm with them, it puts me under so much stress that I want to be alone. I have a very difficult time saying 'no' to people when I'm face-to-face with them. In other words, I'm very 'under-assertive'. So considering that everybody I try to talk to about my problems (especially my mother) either pushes them aside, ignores my feelings, doesn't consider my problems, OR, claims it's all for drama and is just 'attention-seeking antics', it seems that writing fanfiction is the only way I can at least relieve some of my stress. Even though the characters from Hetalia, or any other Anime for that matter, are not real people, I still feel I can relate myself to some of them, and because of that, when I read and write sappy (Sad-Happy, or Sad-with-a-happy-ending) stories, It gives me some sense of reassurance. Anyway, enough of that talk... What do you think so far on this story?

Chapter 2

Story: *Beneath the Mask, Chapter 2*

Disclaimer: *I don't own Hetalia...*

America and England had walked to America's house from the meeting place, and since it wasn't that far from the meeting place, it didn't really take long to get there.

However, even in that short amount of time, England couldn't help but notice America's silence, save for the occasional comment every now and then, which was quite obviously just to fill up time.

Once they'd got in, they were immediately, and, in England's case, *unwelcomingly* greeted by America's alien friend, Tony, and England and him began glaring daggers at each other right away. America then studied them, remembering the *last time* they had 'associated' with each other. Needless to say, several things had got burnt by the time it was all said and done.

America finally sighed, as he walked over, whispering something to Tony that was too low for England to hear. All he knew was that Tony simply nodded, shortly after leaving the room.

"Hey, can you find the guest room on your own?" America suddenly questioned, quickly receiving a look from England. "'Cause I really need to take a piss. Don't worry, I'll be right back."

When America ran off was when realization hit the Brit.

"H-hey!" he started to call after him, but before he did, he'd already left the room. He sighed.

"Geez, doesn't that wanker know *any* manners...?" he muttered in irritation, but at the same time, slight amusement.

He then slowly made his way to guest room, taking some time to scan over the many pictures that filled the walls. Most of them had America in them, and other nations, such as Italy, Romano (which he couldn't help but wonder how he could've possibly managed to get *him*, of all people, in a picture), Japan, several of the Frog (meaning France), and...what's his name again...? Canada? Yeah, that was it.

He somehow found himself feeling a little guilty, when he saw that there were even more pictures of *Tony* and America than *himself* and America. Even though, there *was one*, it was very old, and was back from America's colony days. As hard as it was to say it without causing himself to sulk, he still wished America and him could be have been closer. It wasn't like he *enjoyed* getting in arguments with him all the time. Well, it wasn't like he could fully bring himself to blame the American, as he, himself, constantly just spat insults at him, France, and almost anyone else who crossed his path.

"Bloody hell..." he muttered, giving a somewhat sad smile, as he placed a hand over his forehead. "I'm going to get myself depressed again... *Sigh*. I should probably go on to the guest room now."

Within a minute, he'd found it, remembering where it was from the last time he'd come over, which he had to admit was quite a while.

Meanwhile, unknown to the Brit, America stood in the bathroom, studying himself in the mirror.

"Man, this is so unfair..." he grumbled, holding a hand over what he still considered to be 'fat', even after all the weight he'd lost in the past couple of months. Being a nation, naturally, he could go a lot longer without food, before he started to lose weight. There were limits, *yes*, but they weren't really considered much, not that he fully understood them anyway.

"Why can't I be naturally skinny like Japan, France, or even England...?"

As much as he hated to admit talk about it, he'd always secretly envied some of the other nations, and how they were able to go places without the fear of people insulting them over their 'eating traits', weight, or anything to do with their body in general.

None of them knew it, but the reason he'd missed the last few meetings was pretty much due to not eating. The first few weeks had been the hardest, being used to 'stuffing his face' and all, but in total, it had taken about two months to completely get used to not eating much more than half an apple a day or sometimes, nothing at all.

Then *that* began...

The nations were always insulting him and putting him down. They constantly made fun of him every chance they got, even the ones he considered to be like family. Every one of them seemed to hate him, despite everything he'd done for them, or at least *tried* to do.

Useless

Capitalist Pig

Fat ass

Lazy

Stupid

Idiot

Self-centered

Spoiled Brat

Nosy

Annoying

Obnoxious

The list of insults went on and on. America took a moment to look down at his newly bandaged wrist, before slipping his bomber jacket back on to cover it up. He couldn't help but feel ashamed when he glanced over at the once bloody pocket knife, slipping it back into his pocket.

He'd knew cutting wouldn't make the pain *completely* go away, and it made him felt weak, but...the other nations hated him, and would be happy to see him in such a depressing state. It always seemed to lighten up their day, at least a little, when he was sick or hurting. As idiotic as it may sound, all he wanted was to actually feel like he was wanted and needed, even it meant causing himself to bleed. There were voices that kept telling him that he was doing everyone a favor by hurting himself; that he somehow deserved it. Not only that, but after all things felt he'd done to some of the nations, he just couldn't seem to forgive himself.

Down deep, it made him sick to say it, but in someways, it actually *did* feel good. Sometimes, he'd find himself unable to just 'let go', and would end up reaching for the knife once again. What was saying? He hated cutting. He *hated* it, so why did he continue to do it? Was he addicted...?

Well, it didn't really matter either way, as it wasn't like it could *kill* him or anything. He was a nation, after *all*. There's no way he could just die, right...?

With that question in mind, he suddenly remembered that England was waiting on him, so, putting on his 'idiotic grin', he left, quickly making his way to the guest room.

~ End of Chapter

A/N: What did you think...? Sorry. It's way out of character. It's kind of hard to really completely picture a 'suicidal' America, as he just doesn't seem to be the type to really give in to emotional crap. But at the same time, America is supposed to be one of the youngest nations on the show, meaning he would be fairly naive, compared to others. Whenever I think about all the wars, and betrayals that directly and indirectly involved America, it surprises how he can still smile and be so happy all the time, which makes you wonder just how happy he really is. Anyway, just to let you all know, I'm probably going to bring in Japan sometime throughout the story, seeing how close they are. I don't know if any of you read my other story 'Sticks and Stones', but it pretty much uses the same concept (save for the cutting), and has lots of development between Canada, America, France, and England, plus some fabulous moments with Japan and America. Since this is more centered on England and America, however, I plan to use only a portion of that 'comfort level' with Japan and America...

Anyway, I hope you all liked this chapter okay, there WILL be better ones to come. I promise.

Chapter 3

Story: *Beneath the Mask, Chapter 3*

Warning: *Fluffy(ish) scene from America's childhood, with Big brother England, but, a gain, as mentioned in the description, this NOT a pairing story, people, but rather a family and friendship centered story.*

Disclaimer: I don't own Hetalia...

England had been sitting on the sofa in America's guest room, debating whether he to go see if America was alright, or not. It had to have been at least fifteen minutes by now, and America hadn't acted like he was going to take that long.

Sighing, he began to get up, heading towards the door, however, he immediately stopped, when America finally got back. England jumped when they almost collided.

"Oh, England, I didn't know you'd be standing there. Sorry it took me so long, I wasn't really feeling that well, I guess." America smiled, awkwardly scratching the back of his head.

"I see. I assume you're feeling better?" England inquired, raising an eyebrow at the fact that America, of all of people, could actually get sick when he didn't even know what a *cold* was.

"Yeah, I'm fine now. Anyway, England, there's this super scary horror movie called 'Mama' that Japan seems really fond of. Man, dude, we've got to watch it," America told him, seemingly trying to divert the conversation. At that moment his smile slightly faded. "I mean, if you *want* to, that is..."

England swallowed painfully when he saw the look in the former colony's eyes. Despite his smile, he could easily tell that it was forced.

Not that he would admit it, but he didn't like seeing America forcing himself to smile like that, so after a moment, he sighed, for once allowing himself to give in. "Well, if Japan says it good, I suppose it couldn't hurt."

Then *again*, Japan was...

"Sweet!" America exclaimed excitedly. "I'll go try to set up the DVD player! You can set down if you want."

"Right..." England muttered, going back to where he was sitting moments before. That's when he heard his cell phone ringing. Taking it out of his pocket, he was surprised to find that it was Japan.

"Hello?" he said, answering the phone.

"England-san?" came the Asian's voice.

"Yeah, it's me. Japan, is that you?" England wanted to know.

"Hai, are you with America-san right now?" Japan asked.

"Yeah, something happened in England, so my boss asked me to stay in America for the next few weeks." England explained. "Why? Did something happen? You sound distressed."

"Actually, I got the same message, and I was wondering if I could talk to America-san. I tried calling him, but it didn't ring. Then America's brother...I think...Canada was his name...said that you were with America-san." Japan told him.

"I see... That *git* probably just let his phone die. Hold on one second." he sighed, before looking up to see America crouched over on the floor, apparently frustrated with the DVD Player. "Hey, America. Japan's on the phone. He says he needs to talk to you."

America jumped, startled, quickly rubbing his eyes, before turning to face him. He got up, running over. "Oh, Japan wants to talk to me? Did something happen?" he asked.

"Just answer the... America, were you crying?" England looked at him a little worried.

"No, of *course* not. Hero's *never* cry, dude!" America shooed his hand, dismissively.

"...*Right*..." England could easily tell that the American was bluffing, but said nothing further. "Well, here's the phone. You'd better not mess it up, like *last* time."

"Hey, it's not *my* fault that Russia took such a liking to it..." America grumbled at the reminder.

"Whatever, you wanker. Just take the phone already." England said irritably, as he handed him the phone.

"Yo, Japan, you there?" America asked, smiling as he brought the phone to his ear.

"Hai." he heard Japan answer.

"So what up?" America wanted to know.

"Well, a little while ago, I started preparing to head to the Airport, but my boss suddenly contacted me, saying my flight had been canceled. He told me I'd probably have to stay in America for about a week...and, well I..." Japan trailed off into silence, and before he could have possibly said anything more, America cut in.

"Aw, man, you too? Something also happened with England. If you want to come over to my place, it's cool. We could totally watch that movie you were telling me about a few months ago." America offered.

"That would be fine, thank you. Though I do apologize for bothering you, America-san." said Japan.

"Naw, don't sweat it, dude, it's not your fault. Anyway, where are you right now?" America wanted to know.

"...Actually, I'm still right in the conference room right now. I'm going to find a taxi. I'll be there soon." Japan told him.

"Alright, sweet, see ya then!" America smiled again.

"Hai. Arigato." Japan thanked him, before hanging up.

"Japan is coming over, I presume?" England inquired, as America gave him back the cell phone.

America nodded. "Yeah, I probably need to go and straighten up some of the bedrooms."

As America spoke, England couldn't help but notice the seemingly depressed tone in his voice. He stayed silent, sure he'd heard wrong. He wasn't even sure why he was getting so worried. Was it because he still thought of himself as America's older brother figure, or guardian? Wait, that was stupid question. Of course he still felt that way, at least *some*, but why was he getting so... Ah, what was thinking?! It was just his imagination, he was sure. After all, America had been so cheerful when on the phone just a moment ago. So it was obvious he was simply over-thinking things.

Besides, America couldn't get *depressed* even if it slapped him up-side the head. No, he was just too confident and cheerful all the time to be *able* to get depressed, but, *still*... nobody was *always* happy. *Everyone* got sad at some point or another.

And, either way, if America *did* get depressed, he knew that he had people he could talk to, didn't he?

Bloody hell, there he went *again*; worrying over something that could mean nothing at all!

But what if it wasn't just 'nothing'?

"America, were you crying?"

"No, of course not. Hero's never cry, dude!"

America's words echoed in his head, and earlier's memories from the World Conference suddenly flashed through his head causing him to wonder if he even knew *how* to rely on someone else.

America had always had an obsession with being a hero to those around him. His favorite characters in movies were always ones who would do anything to ensure the safety and happiness of others, even if it meant throwing *themselves* in front of a dagger to protect everyone else, and make them happy. They'd do anything to keep from burdening others with their *own* problems, and also do anything to *ease* everyone *else's* troubles.

Unfortunately, in real life, there weren't really 'heroes' per say, for every person, and more-so, every *nation* would always be disliked by *someone*.

But America was still a fairly young nation, despite everything his country has went through, and because of that, he still had dreams. So, no matter what, he wanted more than anything for America to be able to live freely and as happy as possible.

"Hey, Britain, do you mind getting the door?! I'm kind a busy right this second!" he jumped, when he was suddenly snapped out of his thoughts by America's voice, just then beginning to hear a low ringing coming from the kitchen.

Japan was there, he realized. Getting up, he replied back, saying that he would. When England got to the front door, Japan was looking up at the sky for some reason with a slightly distant look in his eyes.

"Ah, England-san. Konnichiwa." he greeted, bowing respectfully.

"Hello, Japan. Come on in." England briefly nodded in response. Gesturing for him to come in, he held open the door further, so he, himself, was out of the way.

"Arigatou, gozaimasu." Japan stepped in, taking a brief moment to look around. "Is America-san up stairs?"

"I believe so." England answered. "He said he needed to straighten up something, but I presume he'll be back down shortly, so feel free to take a seat in the guest room until then."

"I will, thank you." Japan nodded, giving a small smile.

"Meanwhile, I'm going to see if America has any tea around. I could make you some, if you'd like." England offered, kindly.

Japan immediately paled at the thought of England's 'cooking', or things related, but nervously smiled, politely holding up a hand. "I'm fine, thank you."

England rose an eyebrow. "Are you sure? I don't mind."

"No, It's really fine." Japan shook his head.

"Well, alright then." England shrugged, before making his way to the kitchen, leaving Japan to himself.

Upstairs, America had just finished making up two of the three beds in his house, and was now picking up some stuff on the floor, when he glanced over to see a certain green plush toy, which he hadn't seen in practically decades. Then again, he couldn't really remember the last time he'd even been in that *room*.

"Aw, man, I'd totally forgot I had this." he said, reaching down to pick it up, when a sudden memory flashed before him. It was back from the old days, when he was still just an innocent colony.

"America? Lad, is something the matter?" England asked in worry, when he came in the bedroom, to see the small shaking lump in the covers, which was obviously America. The

Englishman could tell that he was crying. Thunder roared outside, causing the little nation to start quivering even harder than before.

"E-England?" he cried, a little startled. "Is the monster mad at me? Did I do something wrong? I didn't mean to..."

"Shhh...it's okay." England's voice soothed, as he crouched down next to the bed, gently pulling the covers down from smaller nation, to reveal his tear-stained face. "You don't need to worry. It's only thunder, lad, and nobody's mad at you..."

The Brit gave a small smile, tenderly wiping the moisture from around his 'younger brother's' eyes. "Nobody's going to hurt you... I promise..."

"R-really...? It's not a monster...?" America stuttered in confusion. "But it sounds so mad..."

"It's okay, it's not mad, and even less so at you..." England said, as he pushed back some of America's hair, placing a soft kiss on his forehead. "So, let's stop crying, okay?"

"Okay!" America beamed happily.

England smiled. "Also, if you want, I have something that might help you feel better, if you ever get sad again." England told him.

"Really?" America's eyes gleamed in excitement. "What is it?"

"I have to go get it, so I'll be back in minute, alright?" England told him, as America nodded. He quickly got up, leaving the room, to return only moments later, holding a small green plushy, which sort of favored a rabbit. "I used to get scared too, so I always kept good old Mister Mint Bunny with me if I felt like I needed to cry, or let things out. So then, do you think you can do the same?"

"Mhm!" America nodded, smiling brightly as England gave him the plushy. "Thank you, England! Since it's from you, I'll always treasure it, no matter what!"

England gave a soft smile, once again pecking America's forehead, before standing back up. "Good night, America."

America snuggled close to the soft plushy, smiling. "G'night, England!"

America didn't know why, but he just started crying after that.

~ End of Chapter

A/N: What did you think? Sorry for all the fluff in the flashback, but it may just be hint of what's to come. *Wink, wink.

BTW, I'm thinking of starting a story a little bit like this with Romano. Because, even though I CAN relate myself to America, out of ANY Anime characters out there, I can relate myself to Romano the most (on the exception of his cussing and violent disposition).

For one, I have a brother who is constantly getting bragged on and, in a lot of aspects I often find myself being very jealous of him. Even in the Anime, there's a moment he starts to reflect on how he is constantly compared to Veneziano.

Secondly, I myself, believe that Romano struggles a lot with his emotions, and feelings of resentment for some of those around him.

Thirdly, he doesn't seem to have to have as many friends as his brother, and finds it very hard to rely on and trust other people, for the fear of them turning their back on him, or hurting him, or sometimes, it's simply the fact that he feels out of place. Often, because of this, he finds himself feeling very lonely.

Fourthly, even though, he thinks he cares about those 'closest' to him, he still questions if he really does.

Fifthly, he may sometimes cut himself to 'Fill the void' and feel something, and maybe because voices keep telling him that nobody would care anyway, and even if they did care, it wouldn't stop him because, out of anyone, he, himself, was the one who hated him most.

Anyway, tell me if you'd really like me to write it, or think it would make a good story? If so, I'd be glad too :)

Chapter 4

Story: *Beneath the Mask, Chapter 4*

Disclaimer: *I don't own Hetalia...*

"Man, how do you set this crumby thing up...? Hey...Japan, do you think you'd be willing to help me out?"

Japan looked up at America, nodding, as he came over, to look at the DVD player America had been fidgeting with the last few minutes. "Hai, of course."

America chuckled a little, sheepishly, as he moved aside, so the Asian could figure it out. Japan was apt to working with electronics and such, so he naturally managed to get it plugged in and set up fairly easily. However, when he tried to explain everything to America, the blonde just kept shifting awkwardly, obviously not really paying attention to what he was saying.

He finally sighed inwardly in defeat, before handing America the remote.

"Awesome, thanks a lot, dude!" America said, excitedly, as he put in the disk, turning on the tv. "Hey, England, are you almost done in there? I'm about to start the movie." he called.

"Hold your bloody horses, I'm coming!" England's voice snapped from down the hallway.

America paled a little, when the Brit came in the room with a large white ceramic bowl of popcorn. He had to admit that *that* was about the only thing England didn't usually burn when making. But he really didn't need the temptation put before him right now.

"While I was making my tea, I happened to find a bag of popcorn, and decided to make some. I hope you didn't mind, but I assumed you'd want some while we were watching the movie." England told him. The American already knew that he, himself, wasn't going to eat it, but grinned anyway, secretly thankful for the TV's loud volume which blocked out the harsh growl coming from his stomach.

"It's fine, dude. Thanks." he replied, as he was given the bowl. He then sat down on the left side of Japan, who he knew would probably eat at least *some* of the popcorn. Even though the Asian wasn't that big on it, Japan *did* have his moments where he would eat rather salty items.(*cough* Salted Salmon *cough* Tuna *cough cough*)

Handing Japan what he just then realized was actually a ceramic pot, America held up the remote, pressing the play button, while England set down on the other side of the couch.

Japan took the bowl, placing it in his lap as he and America scooted back on the davenport. England, on the hand, was already scooted back per say, but to be a 'proper gentleman', he remained sitting in an up-straight posture, without leaning back.

As the movie progressed, Japan honestly seemed to be the most interested, for America, who did *kind* of get the gist of it, but didn't fully understand the story, kept finding himself looking *past* the TV, rather than *at* it, while England couldn't really grasp the deal with the 'Mama', who appeared to want to help the two children. If that was actually what she wanted, or was trying to do, then why did she keep killing those who were *only* trying to help, as well. He was aware that it was an angry spirit of someone who was previously a mother from some mental institution. As far as he could see, she was pretty much forced into killing her baby and herself, but why did she even bother giving that dream to Annabel as if asking for something, when she only seemed to want *kill* Annabel, even though she wasn't even really doing anything wrong to them. It was as if Mama wanted to be the *only* one to be a 'Mother', but if *that* was so, it still didn't add up, because by what he could tell, she even tried to hurt one of the two girls.

He finally sighed in defeat. How many American horror movies did he really understand *anyway*? Most of the American films he'd watched never completely made that much sense to him. He couldn't help but suppose that it was probably just a difference in culture.

He looked over at Japan, who was quite obviously 'absorbing' the thing. Seriously, what was it with the Japanese and horror? They practically have an obsession with pointless gore, ghost stories, blood, boobs, *pornography*, insanity, and weird things, such as that troll-like creatures that he vaguely remembered to be known as 'Oni'. All he saw in them were that they were usually just there to scare the bloody hell out of you. The Grudge? The Ring? Suicide Club? He really didn't get them...for the only country who knew *real* horror was obviously *yours truly*.

He gave a mischievous smirk at his little 'joke', before gazing over to see America suddenly start clinging to Japan, as if for dear life, when the guy in the movie began taking pictures, the flashes briefly lighting up the dark room every few seconds, to reveal Mama, who appeared to be closer and closer every time, before she finally killed him.

The Asian looked down at America, noticing how light he was, which seemed quite odd to him. America had always been a little...heavier set, and because of that, when he hugged someone, he would often unintentionally squeeze them instead. However, for once, it didn't really seem like America was that heavy. It was as if he'd lost a considerable amount of weight.

But the Asian's current thoughts were immediately pushed aside when he suddenly noticed the moisture in America's eyes, as he was looking at the TV. Was he crying? The movie did have a bit of a sad background story, but surely nothing worth crying about, right?

"America-san?" he felt the American grow tense when saying his name.

"Y-yeah? What is it, dude?" he stammered, gazing up at Japan.

"...Were you crying?" England raised his eyebrow at hearing this, and he once again turned his gaze back over to his former colony in slight worry.

"...No." America said slowly, before shakily sighing, as he sat up, folding his arms. "Japan, dude, you should know that heroes like me never cry."

"Hmph..." England grunted in amusement, turning away to place his cheek his hand. "You really are a bloody idiot..."

However, down deep, despite his comment, he couldn't help but suddenly find himself worrying about his 'brother'.

"Whatever, dudes, I'm..." the American trailed off into silence, jumping, when loud thunder made itself known to all three nations, shaking the entire house.

That's when the TV began flickering, before it just shut off. By now, it was almost night, so the dark clouds pretty much *made* it night, as far as any of them were concerned.

"Blimey, did the power just shut off?!" England immediately exclaimed in the dark.

"It appears so..." Japan replied, rather calmly. He had never really been the type to display much fear of the supernatural, for if *anything*, he seemed to practically *revolve* around it. Even *England*, who was oh so into which craft, couldn't help but feel at least a *little bit* of discomfort in settings like this.

As rain fell outside, an uncomfortable and very *eerie* silence had filled the room, as America just continued standing there shaking.

"America-san, are-" Japan started to ask, when he was cut off by America before he could finish.

I hope I don't offend them or anything, but I've got to say something, or else they'll see through it.

"I...I think I'm gonna go to bed..." he said, turning towards the door. "Sorry, I really don't feel good. You two can go to bed whenever, since I've already showed you guys your rooms and all."

Well, it wasn't a lie...

And with that, he stepped out, leaving both the Brit and Asian confused and rather worried. The looks on their faces told that the two nations were obviously thinking the same thing.

When America's footsteps had eventually vanished down the hall, Japan suddenly began fidgeting with his fingers, after lying down the bowl of popcorn.

"I say, is it just me, or was that a little...odd, even for *America*...?" England questioned aloud, but more to himself than even Japan.

"E-England-san...? I hope you don't mind me asking, but do have even an idea as to how long it's been since America-san last ate...?" Japan wanted to know.

"...No, well, he said he wasn't that hungry earlier at the world meeting, because he'd evidently already eaten this morning, and I haven't seen him eat since then, either... Why?" England asked, thinking it over.

"Well, a little while ago, when America-san...hugged me, he seemed rather light. It was as if he's lost a large amount of weight...I was quite surprised when he didn't bring any hamburgers to the meeting earlier like he usually does." Japan said, ignoring the loud bang of thunder right after he spoke.

"Well..." England paused, gazing away. "Now that you mention it, he does seem a bit pale, I suppose...but, on the other hand, we can't exactly know anything until tomorrow morning. If he doesn't eat any of my breakfast, then we'll confront him on the issue at hand."

"Huhu, I agree, but, England-san, how about you allow me to make the food? I could make a dish that America-san should find...irresistible..." Japan gave a very small, but very *dark*, smirk, as he thought about it. Well, his 'delectable dish' wasn't the only thing he had on mind at that moment, as protecting America's kitchen from a...certain nation was definitely a number one priority as of right now. And, needless to say, most all the nations knew how *well* England and cooking went together. Just like Prussia and Austria, and oil and water, they simply didn't mix, and never would.

"Well, are you really sure?" England rose an eyebrow.

"Huhu. Hai, it's really fine." Japan nodded, trying his best to sound polite, without 'implying anything'.

"Very well, since I assume the power will probably be off for quite sometime, I'm going to go on to bed. Are you coming?" England questioned, standing up.

"Hai." Japan nodded, before following him upstairs.

"Goodnight, Japan." England gave a soft smile, as passed by the two bedrooms America had said they could sleep in.

"Arigatou gozaimasu. Oyasuminasai, Igrisu-san." Japan bowed, causing England to make a brief comment pertaining to his formality with other nations.

"Wait, before you close the door; I hope you don't mind me saying this, but while I do appreciate you being polite and everything, you really don't have to be so formal with me all the time." England said, giving a small smile in the dark.

"Arigatou. I'll try keep that in mind." Japan smiled back, before stepping in the room, closing the door behind him.

He was about to enter *his* room, but stopped, when he suddenly began to pick up on muffled sniffing coming from what he assumed was the end of the hall, though he couldn't see that clearly in the darkness. He slowly followed the sounds to which he soon, sure enough, it to be coming from the last room on the right.

"America...?" he whispered.

There was no reply.

Slowly opening the door, he looked around, trying his best to make out what was what. A large flash of light made its way through the window, bright light illuminating the room, but for only a second, before it was dark again. After a brief moment, thunder once again roared loudly, causing the shaky sobs to only increase. In the brief second that the lightning had lit up the room, he was able to get a glimpse of a large black closet-dresser setting against the wall straight across the room.

Softly closing the bedroom door behind him, he walked over, stopping in front of the closet, he gently knocked on one of its doors.

"...America?" England said, softly, or really as softly as he could manage. "Do you mind if I open this...?"

"E-England? G-go away, limey..." England could easily tell that there was no malice coming from the insult, and was plainly just forced, in possible hopes of him leaving.

"Oi, I can tell you didn't really mean that." England smiled sadly. "Now, for *me*...will you let me come in, lad?"

There was no reply, but he could easily tell that America wanted him to open it, so he did.

It was at that moment, as that he slid open the doors, that another flash of light showed through the room, to reveal the younger nation's tear-stained face, which was filled with so much fright, as he was tightly hugging his knees to his chest. The look in America's eyes was practically unbearable for him, as it almost caused the Brit to break down himself, and that's when he mentally cursed.

'Bloody hell, how could I have forgot? America always hated thunderstorms!'

"...E-Engla-" America began to tremble, unsure of what to say. England was probably disappointed in him for not being able to get passed this fear, something as harmless as...thunder...

Not only that, but...he was suppose to be the hero, wasn't he? Heroes didn't need to rely on anyone else, and burden others with their own problems. They weren't afraid of anything, even less so, some stupid thunder-

His thoughts of confidence were immediately cut short, when another sudden boom startled him, causing him to slightly shout, before he once again started to cry.

"Oi...it's okay, lad..." England soothed, as he reaching out, gently pulling America into a warm embrace. "I'm here... There's no need to cry now..."

"I-I'm alright..." America couldn't help but ask himself. At first, he was very tense, however, after a while, he could feel himself actually beginning to relax, *despite* the thunder.

'Everything really is okay.' he finally realized. 'It's only thunder...'

"Yes, you'll be okay. I promise..." England's soft voice was the last thing he remembered hearing that night, before he eventually fell asleep in his former(?) brother's soft arms...

~ End of Chapter

Translations:

Arigatou: Thank you (Formal)

Oyasuminasai: Good Night

A/N: Please comment if you will.

The point I guess I'm trying to get through with this chapter is to show that if there was someone who typically didn't seem to like me that much, and they just suddenly came into my life one day that I was suffering, saying they cared, I would have a lot of trouble trusting them. I might let them in a little bit on my involuntary problems, however, voluntary issues, such as cutting, Anorexia, or anything like it...well, it's not something I'd just give away right at first, but rather, over time, before I'd really trust them. This is an attempt to show people that recovery is not immediate, but anything can build trust, despite how small it. Is anyone the same, or feel the same way?

BTW, did anyone by chance get the Ouran High School Host Club Reference in this? Kudos to anyone who does. / Beside of that... TamaHaru is love!

Chapter 5

Story: *Beneath The Mask, Chapter 5.*

Disclaimer: *I don't own Hetalia... *sigh**

His surroundings whizzed past him. It was still dark, but streetlights lit up the sidewalks enough for him to run with no problem. Being the nation that he was, he had stronger legs than any human by far, so he was able to run fast. However, for nations, considering it the norm, it just meant that much more exercise that needed to be done. To add to that, in his *personal* case, he'd worked his body up to being used to running hours on end without hurting later at all.

However, eventually he realized something wasn't right. He noticed he wasn't sweating at all. This wasn't right. He had to sweat to lose weight, and he was absolutely sure he'd be able to sweat even at 6AM in the morning. He knew he'd been running at least since three. *This wasn't right at all.*

It was a known fact that sweating signified the loss of weight, so if he wasn't sweating while running like this, running like this, then he definitely couldn't be losing any weight, could he?

'To play it safe, I guess I'll just have to run faster then...', he told himself, speeding up to as fast as his legs would carry him.

He knew he was smart for doing this in the morning, because, while there *were* people up in the city and cars were driving around, he wasn't as noticed, as he also tried to wear darker and 'less flashy' clothing than his typical attire. The less people there were to question him, the better, *especially* while England and Japan were staying there. Especially *Japan*, because *dude*, that guy could *seriously* read your mind or something, if you weren't careful...!

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to both England - *who was probably still dead asleep, by the way* - and America, Japan had been able to contact an old acquaintance who happened to work at a nearby China town, regarding a 'special delivery'. Not that he was particularly that fond of preparing Chinese food over his own, but, on the other hand, Chinese blow-fish was better than *no* blow-fish, and, he absolutely had to have it made before either one of the other nations were to wake up, for separate but rather *obvious* reasons. Even *Italy* would have had to agree with him.

"Huhu... This *will* be irresistible, even if it *was* from China-san's house. I'll make sure of it.", he said aloud, before soon enough finishing the last preparations.

However, he was immediately short-stopped when he heard the front door suddenly open. Throwing down the knife he was holding, he immediately headed down the hall leading to the front door. Much to his dismay, but more to his *surprise*, it was America.

'I've screwed up...!' they both realized at once.

"A-America-san, I was- I didn't know you had left. Where did you go this early in the morning?", the Japanese man stuttered nervously for a second, regaining his typical 'emotionless' composure. However despite his said composure, down deep, he knew America could say he'd already eaten, and as a result he, himself, wouldn't be able to prove the blonde wrong.

"Oh, Japan." America gave a awkward laugh. "How's it going? I was just out - you know - uh, taking a little walk, doing some exercise, of course; that sort of thing."

"Oh... I see.", Japan pondered a moment, before he realized it. *'America was exercising...? But isn't it a bit-?'*

"Well, I'm gonna take a shower, so be careful about the water and stuff, kay?" America cut his thoughts off, before he could continue or process it.

"Hai...", he muttered, trying to process what had just happened. It wasn't long after America had headed off to the bathroom that England had came downstairs, approaching him.

"Good morning, Japan,", England tiredly greeted him. "was America just here? When I was upstairs I could have sworn I just barely heard him talking"

"Ohaiyogozaimasu, England-san." Japan, bowed respectfully, greeted him back.

"Hai, He was evidently out exercising..." he explained. "so he said he was going to take a shower. I don't know how long ago he left, but I assume he's been up and out quite a while."

"I see..." England said simply, not really wanting to go into much detail about the night before. Even so, it was still odd. He'd fallen asleep in America's closet, yet he'd woke up on the bed in the room that he had let him use.

'That git...' he suddenly thought, grunting slightly, when it dawned on him that the wanker had probably carried him there, but he had sure been careful enough to not wake him up, when he had. (Remember, this is NOT UsUK, or at least it's not suppose to be. What, was America suppose to just leave England asleep on the floor...? = - =)

"Engla-", Japan had started to say, however, was cut off by England before he finish.

"H-What?" he stammered, jumping, startled.

"Oh, Japan," the Briton sighed. "my mind had wondered off there for a second. Forgive me."

"Daijoubudesu..." Kiku sighed, nodding dismissively. "Oh! England-san, I've prepared some blow-fish. Would you like some?"

"Oh, sure, I'd be delighted to, but you know, Japan, you didn't have to do that by yourself...as I would have-" Arthur very briefly cut himself off in thought, before having pondered it.

"Wait a second. Where did you get blow-fish from?! You didn't have it yesterday, did you?"

"No," Japan admitted, as they stepped into the kitchen. "But let's just say I'm *always* prepared for situations like this one."

...

"I say, Japan, this is delicious!" England exclaimed, after taking a bite of the blow-fish Japan had made-backslash-prepared.

"Itadekimasu." the Asian man muttered with his eyes closed, before giving one of his rare smiles.

"Arigatou. I'm glad you like it, but..." he briefly trailed off into silence, before snapping his chopsticks. "what do you think we should do about America-san?"

England sighed. "Well, I-"

...

Blood trailed down to his wrist, before it dripped off, dispersing in the water to slowly stain it red. He just sat there, contemplating the deep crimson which continued to flow from the deep lacerations covering his arm. He watched as they slowly tried to heal themselves, before he reopened them again with the blade of his pocket knife. He hopelessly repeated the same process several times, before tears suddenly began to whell up in his eyes. Leaning back against the wall of the bathtub, the knife slipped out of his grip.

'Damn it,' he mentally cursed, but didn't make an effort to pick it back up. *What was he even doing...? Why was he doing this?*

As he buried his face in his arms, he couldn't stop crying. No matter how hard he tried, he just started crying that much more. *'Why am I feeling like this? I feel like trash... Why couldn't I have been a normal child, sorta like...him... Everything hurts. This has all become a part of me, despite how much I really hate it...'*

"I really need to someone to talk to...", he cried, trying his best avoid crying. "but I'm such a loner down deep. I only have *Tony* to talk to, and it's not like *he'd* care. Besides, talking couldn't really help me, anyway, could it? I'm just meant to feel this way I guess. What would I even say...?"

He felt more tears whell up in his eyes, weakly cursing aloud. "Damn it all, man... Why the hell am I feeling like like this?"

...

"Japan, is it just me, or has America been in the shower for quite some time now?" Arthur asked. Kiku looked up at him, nodding.

"Hai, it has been quite a while. Last I remember, he always-", he'd started to speak, but before he could finish, his cell phone suddenly began ringing, interrupting him in the midst of his sentence.

"Oh, sumimasen...!" he exclaimed apologetically, jumping up, as he took out his phone.

"Moshimoshi." he answered, a bit nervously, though England couldn't seem to help but wonder why Japan would be so worked up over a phone call. At hearing a familiar Italian voice, the Asian seemed to be a bit more at ease.

"Ciao, Japan~!", the Northern Italian's cheery voice chimed from the phone.

"Italy-kun?" Japan was a bit surprised when he heard this, but he didn't know why.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Big Brother Prussia and Germany wanted to know if you all had any plans. We heard from...what's his name again... Canada! That's right! We heard from Canada that you and England were staying over at America's place. So are you guys busy today?", Italy excitedly wanted to know, nearly shouting into the phone. Wait, since this was Italy, it wouldn't be called, 'shouting', right...? More like...squealing? Oh well. No use saying anything. It was North Italy, after all. Perhaps something like that could be helped...

Turning to England, he briefly considered the question he was about to ask.

"Um... England-san, do you know if America-kun has any plans for today..?" he, wanted to know with uncertainty.

"Um, I'm not sure. I could go ask him, if you want me to." Arthur offered.

"Yes, thank you." Kiku nodded.

"But why do you need to know?"

"Italy-san, is there something you're all planning to do...?" Japan questioned.

"Si," Italy chirped over the phone. "they were planning to invite you all to eat at the nearby Golden Coral later for around twelve if you all want. It'd be a lot of fun~!"

"I see. Germany-san, Prussia-san, and Italy-san are inviting America-san and us to eat at Golden Coral with them later at noon."

"Oh, I see. I actually wouldn't mind that. I'll go ask him." England replied, letting himself out of the room.

"Thank you, England-san." he nodded.

"Italy-san, do you mind if I spoke to Germany-san?" he said after a moment.

"Um, ve... Germany's...kinda busy right this second..."

"What is it he needs?" Prussia's voice suddenly sounded in the background.

"Um-v-ve- H-hey...! The phone...! Ah... Ve, talk to you later, Japan!"

"Yo, Japan, I'm sure *whatever* it is you need, I can convey the message to him just as well, right?"

"Um. Sure. I suppose that's fine, but just promise me you won't tell anyone else..." Japan sighed, a bit reluctantly.

"Um. Okay. I won't, if it's really that important." Prussia said in a slightly confused voice.

"Doumo... Arigatou... Well it's about America-san..."

"What about him? Did something happen...?"

"No... but England-san and I believe he's probably not eaten for a while. Do you think you'd want to help us 'look out for him' for a while?"

"I... Actually, *ja*, I'll do whatever I can... Thanks for telling me, Japan." Prussia said.

"*Hai, arigatou...* Also... *ano...* have you-" Japan started to say, but was cut off by England who suddenly re-entered the room.

"He said that's fine." he informed.

"America-san said he would be coming." Japan repeated to the 'Prussian' on the phone.

"Awesome! We'll see you there, then! Keseses~!" Gilbert chimed a bit to obnoxiously for his comfort.

The Japanese man had forgotten what he was even going to say a moment before, so he just gave a simple 'hai'.

"*Domou arigatou, Kami-sama...*" Japan sighed in relief, after the phone hung up.

"So, um..." England mumbled, awkwardly, not sure what to say now.

"What time is it...?" Japan questioned.

"Around 10:30, I believe..." England answered.

"I see..." Japan said, quietly but quickly, darting away his gaze.

"This is too awkward, and I don't what I should say...? I really don't want to sound rude, either, so what should I do...?" both of them unknowingly thought in unison. 'Um...'

"Hey, I'm going to make myself some tea. Japan, would you like some?" England finally got up, hoping to break this terribly awkward silence.

"No thank you..." Japan shook his head, waving his hand as politely as possible(***haha PSP cough cough***). "I'm not particularly thirsty, right now..."

"Oh, alright then. If you do happen to want some, just ask me. I'll make you some."

Japan had learned that England's tea actually wasn't that bad, so he wasn't lying when he said he wasn't that thirsty. That actually really is all there was to it.

"I do hope lunch will go well, though..." England mumbled, briefly thinking back to the night before, his eyes downcast.

"Hai. I do too. How did America respond to you when you asked him about it, though?" Japan gazed over at him out of curiosity.

"He seemed to pause for a while before finally replying, but I believe he was still in the shower at the time, as he then said, 'Sure, yeah, dude! Tell them that's fine. I'll be out in a little while, kay?', and that's all."

"I see. Prussia-san said he'd help us out if need be, too." Japan told him, with a bit an unexplained smile.

"To be honest, I'm actually rather grateful for that, if he will. Did you ask him to, though?"

"Sort of, but not really. I assumed he actually wants to."

"Huh, that's weird. Prussia hardly ever actually ever would do something like that." England said, pondering it in deep thought.

"Please forgive me, but I have to disagree with you on this one." Japan said, meeting his eyes.

"You do?" England inquired out of curiosity, a bit surprised by this. When did *Japan...ever-*?

"Hai. Prussia-san actually isn't a bad person, you should know. He really is caring down, even though he doesn't it show very often. Same goes for Germany-san, as well..., England-san..."

"Ah, I see now..." England remarked quietly. "You must know them rather well, don't you?"

"Hai. I do. I *am* the master of reading moods, after all." Japan declared proudly, but rather quietly.

"Hah, yes, I suppose you're right about that one." England remarked, lightly amused.

"Yo, mornin' everyone! How's it goin', dudes?!" America burst in the kitchen smiling at that point.

The only thing they do after that was hope; hope everything would be okay, and that *America* would be okay.

"Good morning, again, America."

"Hai. Again, Ohayou gozaimasu, America-san."

"Dude, I told you before, you don't have to be so formal with me all the time, brooo!"

"Please don't touch me..."

~End of Chapter

PS: When it said 'him', it was referring to Davie, America's first human friend, from one of Hidekaz's Hetalia comic from a while back. I can't remember the name of it right of hand though, unfortunately. But it was really sad. : (

Translations:

Itadekimasu - Thank you for the food.

Arigatou - Thank you.

sumimasen - Excuse me.

Moshimoshi - Hello(on the phone).

Ohaiyougozaimasu -Good morning

hai - yes

Daijoubudesu - It's alright

~~~~~H-E-T-A-R-I-A!

A/N: What do you think? I know it's not that eventful, but at least something got done, right? So, what do you Prussia's motive is? Personal experience or just friendliness~?

Jaa matane~!

Chapter 6

Story: Beneath the Mask, Chapter 6

Disclaimer: I don't own Hetalia.

It makes me so happy that so many have taken an interest to this story. Every single one of you out there, thank you so much for your support. :3

He hadn't actually wanted to go, but he didn't want to 'disappoint' or sound 'rude', or let them down, either.

He hadn't even had an idea as to what to say all of a sudden when England had asked him that, but he wanted to try to be nice and somewhat sociable, considering how all of them *had* seemed to be able to push aside their differences to go somewhere like a restaurant, even.

So here he was now, standing outside of a *Golden Coral*, a buffet restaurant, being hugged by a cheery North Italy, and being 'graced by the awesome presence' of 'the awesome Prussia'.

He forced a smile, anxiously trying to push back the knowledge of, and *ignore* the obviously worried glances he was receiving.

Unknowingly, North Italy had brushed a semi-sensitive area, and he barely held back the urge to laugh.

"So, dudes, how's it going, Prussia? Has Germany been taking *care* of you?"

Prussia just smirked. "Hah. As *if*. I'm way too awesome to need some baby sitter, so I've been watching after *him*, instead. Keseses~"

"No you haven't." Germany looked away, a bit awkwardly. "Quit being so cocky, *Prußen*..."

"Aw~! Come on now~! Don't be shy~! Awesome big brother dearest always knows his almost as awesome little *bruder* best of all, no matter *what* he says or may insist." Germany seemed to jump slightly, startled when an arm was suddenly thrown around his shoulders.

"H-hey." Germany looked over at his brother, and, for once, there wasn't a cocky grin; the albino was giving a truly graceful and genuine smile to him, and he couldn't help but give a small smile back in return, albeit a little red.

"Yo. What do you guys we go ahead and make our way inside, already? I'm starving!" America suddenly said, receiving odd and almost surprised looks from both England and Japan.

He just had to play along this one time, if only to not burden or worry any of them. He could throw every single bit of it up, after excusing himself to the restroom, *after* 'stuffing his face', like he usually did', anyway.

"Yes, of course, America..." England said, giving a strange reminiscent sort of smile.

"Si~! I'm hungry as well! Come on, you big slowpokes~!" North Italy then beamed in agreement.

"H-hai. For once, I do have to agree with Italy-san." Japan tried to keep from smiling, but suddenly it was obvious that he was just as excited about this get-together as the *rest* of them.

"Sorry, but you'd probably agree with anyone or anything if it has to do with food..." Germany muttered.

"*O-oi!* No, I-th-that's...! It's not my fault...! My citizens have made me that way, Germany-san...!" the Japanese man insisted, stammering and suddenly flushing in awkwardness a bit at the comment. Yes, he *did* love trying many different foods, as long as they weren't dyed any weird colors like purple, blue, or green, like in, '*Green Eggs and Ham*'... Surely, there wasn't anything wrong with that, was there...?

"Yes, yes. We know... Come on, ol' chap. It's perfectly fine with me, myself." England assured with a smile, along with most everyone else, in some form of amusement at how 'passionate' Japan could all of a sudden get over certain things, at times. It *was* understandable, though, as he *was* a nation, they had to admit.

Everyone seemed to be snickering or at least smiling a bit, except for America, and Japan(for obvious reasons), and then North Italy, who suddenly looked over at America, momentarily studying him with a... understanding gaze. Germany noticed his happy expression seemed to fade a bit, a brief look of worry and melancholy in his eyes, before he retracted back to brightly smiling and encouraging them to just hurry on in. Something told the blonde that Italy had noticed something just then that had made him... *sad*, but before he could have the chance to call on the usually cheery Italian, Prussia was already pulling him on in.

"Keseses~! Come on west...! Don't be so slow! You're gonna be the last one in, if you don't freaking hurry, already...!"

"Yeah, dude, what Prussia said; don't start getting worried or depressed on us, now!" America told him.

"Now look who's talking... I'm such an idiot. If both Germany and Italy are acting like that, too, then at least I'd be less suspicious, and it would just be seen as anxiousness for this unlikely gathering. Still, what if someone starts wanting some kind of explanation as to everyone's weird behavior...? It would probably all just go back to me then... What will I even say, anyway...?"

"Hey, guys, listen, um... Can I cover your meals?" He suddenly decidedly offered, wanting to see everyone there smile in appreciation only so he himself, could as well, just like them, even if he wasn't all too fond of the idea of using a huge portion of free spending money that

he had been trying to save up. He could already hear China in the background, and even England fussing at him for wasting all that money on luxuries, but he wanted to do this, if only to see.

Besides if someone else payed for his food, he'd only feel really bad later for certainly letting them wasting their money, in *that* manner, on a relatively 'good', but still 'inconsiderately' wasted meal, when he was done, later.

"What? America? You can't be serious, can you? That would be really unnecessary, you should know. And if your going to do something like that, then at least let me he-"

"No. I can't." America cut him off, rather seeming to take him by surprise. At this point, everyone was studying him in worry, but not exactly; more like with an almost baffled look, expressing something along the lines that said, "Is America, of all people really asking to cover our meals...? That's not that like him. It's almost like the look in his eyes is saying 'I know I have other things I should be using it on, but I *do* want to do this for you all'".

"Well, um... I want to cover your meals, kinda to say, 'thanks', I guess... Not only that, but... well this *is* America, isn't it...? It's my homeland now, so I want to." he smiled at them, somehow hiding the pain in what he was saying from his voice.

"Well, if that's the case, I won't object, I suppose... Thank you, America." England nodded in understanding, and a slight shrug, momentarily patting his shoulder.

"Si~! Grazie, America~! That's really nice of you~!" North Italy chimed, smiling innocently at him.

'He's wrong. I'm actually not all that nice, North Italy...'

"Mn." Germany just nodded in respect.

'Germany is probably still mad at me, after all we've been through... He's just acting nice out of obligation, right...?'

"Kesese~! I actually don't mind paying for it all, *myself*, and originally I was going too, considering I can tolerate all you guys, and that you guys can tolerate my awesomeness." Prussia laughed.

'...Huh?'

"..but, if you really insist, I won't stop you."

"Yeah. Thanks, dude... And I'd be glad to do this again some time. Maybe in another country?" America spoke, looking at them.

A sudden silence had settled between them after he said that. His heartbeat sped up immensely, and suddenly he hoped he hadn't said something weird or something he just *shouldn't* have.

However, he was relieved when Italy once again spoke up, breaking through the awkward tension which had almost completely enveloped them, and was nearly managing to *suffocate* him.

"Si~! It would be a lot of fun, if we could get *fratello* Spain and *fratello* Romano, and even... well... *Sig.* Russia, and... *Sig.* China... Ve~ Next, let's all go to Italy~!"

Honestly, nobody seemed to know what to think about what Italy had said.

Germany, who had been the most silence the whole time, next to Japan, seemed unsurprised. Even if Russia and China, could be terrible nations at times, *just like all of them...*, they were human down deep, where it counted, right?

"Ja. I agree with *Italien...* All of us may have our personal grudges as nations, but... if we're going to be gathering like this again, it would be wrong to not invite anyone who would want to go because of what the nation inside of us may feel. To be honest, all of the nations out there... are just as human as all of you are... That's my own opinion on this, so I can't hate you, though if you don't agree me." he told them, straight up, not regretting in the slightest, but still not all that tuned to the silence that was now quickly ruining the mood.

"*H-hai...* I also agree with Germany-san, Italy-san, *and* America-san."

"...Right, whatever..." England just mumbled, not particularly wanting to hurt any of their feelings. Regardless if he knew what Germany had *was true*, he still wasn't all that fond of China, even as person. Honestly, though, now that he thought about it, *Yao* was one of the oldest nation personifications of them all, so he, of all people, had definitely faced some of the worst tragedies in history. The guy's citizens and huge unhappy population, and the depression and anger from his people, must have had a rather large effect on his mental status...

Russia couldn't be *all* that different then, could he? Maybe... he just handled in a different way...?

"I also agree as well." he then said, in acceptance.

"Then we're all in agreement, right?" Prussia smiled, once again throwing an arm over Germany's shoulder.

"*Das war mutig. Du bist wirklich genial. Danke, deutschland...*"

"Yeah," America nodded, giving a thumbs up. "thanks, guys."

Some *stupid* and frustrating voice in the back of his head might question why he couldn't have "just taken up their offer to begin with and let *them* pay and simply stomach the food they'd kindly covered for him, if he really wanted to show them kindness and 'appreciation'", but the only possible way to answer that was... *it wouldn't work, because he couldn't just look past his obsession with loosing this weight and making them and him happy and proud of him.*

...Would he *ever* be happy, in the end, with who he was, and *what* he was...? Maybe, but... he completely doubted he'd ever be able to be as happy as everyone else, and... as 'awesome' and likable as someone Prussia or his brother, or even Italy, But, as long as there was some kind of happiness or satisfaction from *someone*, he had to admit it was... *enough*, even if he *would* always feel a bit jealous of them. Why couldn't *he* be happy, just like them, without having to give away all of his own stuff, and practically his own *soul*...?

Why did he always sacrifice nearly everything of his to see other people happy about *him* even *being* there, if he still knew that he wouldn't be happy or anything, after they left and were gone later...? Why was it such a bad habit of his, anyway?

He knew he couldn't stop, *wouldn't* stop, with the self-harm, self-loathing, and nor even hating himself when he *couldn't* hate himself, so... why should he even bother *trying*, and, considering that he didn't care or want to try to stop, he still couldn't help but just *think* about it and let it continue to *frustrate* him so much.

All just because he was *addicted* to it...

And of that, *alone*, hurt him more than he could ever understand or even *begin* to comprehend, so he just continued to brood about it, because over time of being used to it, he'd almost began to *want* to hurt, because it was a part of him, now, even with other people around.

He still somehow wanted to reach out, but he didn't know *how*, nor did his mind seem to *want* to reach out, as he wasn't going to 'seek attention out of pity', because he didn't want it, nor need it.

Yet his heart yearned to understand it all... It knew that he needed someone to be there to embrace him, and to be able to cry over their shoulder every once in awhile, so why *couldn't* he reach out...?

Simple, he was a *hero*, and *America* didn't *want* him to reach out and ask for help.

He didn't need it, as he'd brought all of it on himself, with only *himself* to blame for it.

...So Alfred did *nothing*. That was all he knew, or was *allowed* to *feel*, and because of that he *hated* being a nation, and... he hated himself for that, but, at the same time, just *accepted* it... Because that's all there ever was, *anyway*...

~ *End of First Part of Chapter 7.*

Next part hopefully will be coming soon...

Translations:

"Das war mutig. Du bist wirklich genial. Danke, deutschland..." -

"That was brave. You really are awesome... Thank you, Germany..."

A/N: What do you all think? I'm planning to eventually go back over this story, and re-edit it. I've been working on a Durarara fanfiction about Izaya Orihara called 'Hope of Morning'(very similar concepts to this fanfic) and since I've started it, and have been working on deconstructing his complex masochistic personality/ longing, and 'love of humans', it's really been improving my writing, at least *I* think. I've been really busy lately, though, and I've been going through a lot of stuff in my life.

So it really does make me happy and content to read and write fanfictions, and to be able to know that there are other people semi-like me. Writing about characters like this helps me be able to connect to things easier. Again, it really means a lot that there are people out there that are supporting me in some way or another, by just the fact that they reading my more serious stories, *especially* ones like these, with this heavy content being what is.

Thank you, all of you out there for letting me know that least some people are enjoying and listening to part of *my own* story, even if it is through a 'fake' character from some TV show or anime. Not a lot of people out there understand, and they just say crap like, "It's only fiction, so you're just being delusional and insist on dramatizing things."

But you know what? It's the fact that it *is* fiction that you get to experience feelings that you may have never been *able* to experience before. And that's nearly enough for me, *myself*. No, I'm fully aware that anime *isn't* "real", but to be honest, at times, anime and fanfiction, are the only things that ever allow me to open my 'shell' and truly *feel* real. In truth, it isn't the character or animation, or book or items you can hold in your hand, including even pictures, that matters.

It's the depth, and the fact that I'm actually to feel *connected* with *somebody*, whether they're 'real' or *not*. It's not the character, but it's the *character* that matters to me. *They* may not be 'real', but *their* character *is* real, or feels real enough to me, anyways. Call me delusional if you want, but... this is the way I feel.

Anyway..., I just wanted to say 'thank you' to *all* of you out there, for reading and supporting this story, if you still will, and, hopefully, I'll be able to update some more, eventually. And I still haven't forgotten about that hetafic about Mr. South Italy, yet, and I still certainly *do* plan on writing it once I get the chance, and am not in an author's block. In fact, I even have two or three pages of lined paper as a rough draft already written for a starter, so maybe one day soon, you all be able to see it, ne~? Well, Ja ne~

Ciao, friends~ Ve... that's it for now~

Gomenasai...

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